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2015 Southeast Alaska Drift Gillnet Fishery Management Plan

by

Dan Gray,

Randall Bachman,

Tom Kowalske,

Scott Forbes,

Scott Walker,

and

Eric Coonradt

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Alaska Department of Fish and Game **Division of Commercial Fisheries**

Symbols and Abbreviations

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Weights and measures (metric)

centimeter	cm
deciliter	dL
gram	g
hectare	ha
kilogram	kg
kilometer	km
liter	L
meter	m
milliliter	mL
millimeter	mm

Weights and measures (English)

cubic feet per second	ft^3/s
foot	ft
gallon	gal
inch	in
mile	mi
nautical mile	nmi
ounce	oz
pound	lb
quart	qt
yard	yd

Time and temperature

day	d
degrees Celsius	°C
degrees Fahrenheit	°F
degrees kelvin	K
hour	h
minute	min
second	s

Physics and chemistry

all atomic symbols	
alternating current	AC
ampere	A
calorie	cal
direct current	DC
hertz	Hz
horsepower	hp
hydrogen ion activity (negative log of)	pH
parts per million	ppm
parts per thousand	ppt, ‰
volts	V
watts	W

General

Alaska Administrative Code	AAC
all commonly accepted abbreviations	e.g., Mr., Mrs., AM, PM, etc.
all commonly accepted professional titles	e.g., Dr., Ph.D., R.N., etc.
at	@
compass directions:	
east	E
north	N
south	S
west	W
copyright	©
corporate suffixes:	
Company	Co.
Corporation	Corp.
Incorporated	Inc.
Limited	Ltd.
District of Columbia	D.C.
et alii (and others)	et al.
et cetera (and so forth)	etc.
exempli gratia (for example)	e.g.
Federal Information Code	FIC
id est (that is)	i.e.
latitude or longitude	lat or long
monetary symbols (U.S.)	$, ¢
months (tables and figures): first three letters	Jan,...,Dec
registered trademark	®
trademark	™
United States (adjective)	U.S.
United States of America (noun)	USA
U.S.C.	United States Code
U.S. state	use two-letter abbreviations (e.g., AK, WA)

Mathematics, statistics

all standard mathematical signs, symbols and abbreviations	
alternate hypothesis	H_A
base of natural logarithm	e
catch per unit effort	CPUE
coefficient of variation	CV
common test statistics	(F, t, χ^2, etc.)
confidence interval	CI
correlation coefficient (multiple)	R
correlation coefficient (simple)	r
covariance	cov
degree (angular)	°
degrees of freedom	df
expected value	E
greater than	>
greater than or equal to	≥
harvest per unit effort	HPUE
less than	<
less than or equal to	≤
logarithm (natural)	ln
logarithm (base 10)	log
logarithm (specify base)	$\log_2$, etc.
minute (angular)	'
not significant	NS
null hypothesis	H_O
percent	%
probability	P
probability of a type I error (rejection of the null hypothesis when true)	α
probability of a type II error (acceptance of the null hypothesis when false)	β
second (angular)	"
standard deviation	SD
standard error	SE
variance	
population	Var
sample	var

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By

Dan Gray and Eric Coonradt
Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Division of Commercial Fisheries, Sitka

Randall Bachman
Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Division of Commercial Fisheries, Haines

Scott Forbes
Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Division of Commercial Fisheries, Douglas

Tom Kowalske
Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Division of Commercial Fisheries, Wrangell

Scott Walker
Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Division of Commercial Fisheries, Ketchikan

Alaska Department of Fish and Game
Division of Commercial Fisheries, Publications Section
802 3rd Street, Douglas, AK 99824

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Dan Gray and Eric Coonradt
Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Division of Commercial Fisheries,
304 Lake St. Rm. 103, Sitka, AK 99835-7563

Randall Bachman
Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Division of Commercial Fisheries,
Mile 1, Haines Highway, Haines, AK 99827-0330

Scott Forbes
Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Division of Commercial Fisheries,
1008 F Street, Juneau, AK 99801

Bo Meredith
Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Division of Commercial Fisheries,
2030 Sea Level Drive, Suite 205 Ketchikan, AK 99901

Tom Kowalske
Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Division of Commercial Fisheries,
215 Front Street, Wrangell, AK 99929

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ABSTRACT

This management plan provides an overview of the expected salmon run sizes, regulations, management issues, and harvest strategies for the Southeast Alaska drift gillnet fisheries in 2015. Drift gillnet fisheries are planned at Tree Point and Portland Canal (District 1), Prince of Wales Island and Stikine River (Districts 6 and 8), Taku River/Port Snettisham (District 11), Lynn Canal (District 15), and in the following terminal hatchery areas: Neets Bay (District 1), Nakat Inlet (District 1), Anita Bay (District 7), Speel Arm (District 11), Deep Inlet (District 13), and Boat Harbor (District 15).

Key words: Southeast Alaska, drift gillnet, management plan, Pacific salmon, *Oncorhynchus*, outlook, forecast, terminal harvest area, hatchery, 2015.

INTRODUCTION

This management plan provides an overview of the expected salmon run sizes, regulations, management issues, and harvest strategies for the Southeast Alaska drift gillnet fisheries in 2015.

For the recent 10-year period 2004 to 2013, an average of 475 Southeast Alaska drift gillnet limited entry permits were issued annually, of which an average of 85% were actively fished each year (Conrad and Gray 2014). In 2014, 473 permits were issued, of which 432 (91%) were actively fished. A historical low of 348 permits were fished in 2004. Drift gillnet harvests have averaged approximately 4.5 million salmon annually over the recent 10 years from 2004 to 2013, and 3.0 million salmon since statehood from 1960 to 2013. In the last ten years, the species composition of the drift gillnet harvest has been 58% chum, 24% pink, 11% sockeye, 7% coho, and <1% king salmon. Of the total commercial salmon harvest in Southeast Alaska, the most recent 10-year average drift gillnet fishery harvests have included 44% of the sockeye, 25% of the chum, 12% of the coho, 10% of the king, and 3% of the pink salmon.

The five traditional drift gillnet fishing areas in Southeast Alaska are shown in Figure 1: Tree Point and Portland Canal (District 1); Prince of Wales (District 6); Stikine (District 8); Taku/Snettisham (District 11); and Lynn Canal (District 15). In addition, drift gillnet fisheries occur in several Terminal Harvest Areas (THAs) adjacent to hatchery facilities and at remote release sites throughout the region. Each of these gillnet fisheries are discussed separately in this management plan. A summary of the 2014 season drift gillnet harvest for each species by fishery area and type is presented in Table 1. The most recent 10-year historical harvests and average harvests are presented in Table 2 for Tree Point, Table 3 for Prince of Wales, Table 4 for Stikine River, Table 5 for Taku/Snettisham, and Table 6 for Lynn Canal.

The drift gillnet fishery primarily targets king salmon during the spring season; sockeye, pink, and chum salmon during the summer season; and coho and chum salmon during the fall season. Directed commercial fisheries harvesting Stikine and Taku rivers king salmon began in 2005 after ceasing in the 1970s. From 2005 through 2008 and in 2012, District 8 was opened to directed Stikine River king salmon fisheries. In 2009 through 2011, run size estimates for Stikine River king salmon were not adequate to allow for directed commercial fisheries. In 2012, preseason forecast estimates allowed for limited directed fisheries in District 8. After openings in three consecutive weeks, inseason estimates fell below the minimal threshold level to allow for directed commercial fishing to continue. Preseason and inseason Stikine River king salmon forecasts for 2013 and 2014 did not produce an Allowable Catch (AC) large enough for directed U.S. commercial fisheries. Similarly, the 2015 Stikine River king salmon preseason forecast is not adequate to allow for directed commercial fisheries. In District 11, directed fisheries on Taku River king salmon occurred in 2005, 2006, 2009, and 2012. In 2012, conservative 12-hour

openings were allowed in the first two weeks of the season based on the preseason forecast, however, subsequent inseason estimates of run size were too small to provide any further directed fishing opportunity. Similar to the past two seasons, the 2015 preseason Taku River king salmon run forecast will not allow any fisheries.

SALMON RETURN EXPECTATIONS

In Southeast Alaska, the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) issues a region wide preseason harvest forecast for pink salmon. ADF&G also derives preseason forecasts for several specific stocks including Taku and Stikine River king and sockeye salmon. Private non-profit hatchery operators also derive preseason forecasts for salmon returning to many enhancement projects throughout Southeast Alaska. The projected returns of sockeye, chum, and coho salmon presented in this management plan are qualitative and should not be considered official department forecasts. These return projections are calculated primarily from parent-year catch and escapement data and are expressed in terms of probable magnitude of return relative to historic levels.

Preseason forecasts generated by the Stikine River king salmon forecast model produced a terminal run size estimate of 40,600 fish; however, the final agreed upon preseason forecast for the Stikine River is 30,200 large king salmon (large king salmon are greater than 659 mm MEF). Since the model consistently overestimated the run size in recent years, the preseason forecast was reduced by using the recent five-year percent error of 35%. Other considerations taken into account for reducing the model's forecast includes a poor confidence in the estimate of age-4 king salmon in 2014 and the general poor performance of many king salmon stocks throughout Alaska in recent years. A forecast of 30,200 large Stikine River king salmon provides an AC of 210 fish and allows for limited U.S. directed fisheries. However, an AC of this size is not large enough to allow for directed commercial fisheries. If reliable inseason abundance estimates indicate the run is adequate to prosecute a manageable directed fishery, the U.S. may have directed king salmon commercial fisheries in District 8 during late May or early June.

The forecast generated by the Taku River king salmon model produced a terminal run size estimate of 36,900 fish. However, the final agreed-upon preseason forecast for the Taku River was reduced to 26,100 large king salmon due to consistent overestimation of run size in recent years. The bias-corrected forecast was calculated by discounting for the five-year average relative error of 41%. Other considerations taken into account for reducing the model's forecast include the general poor performance of many king salmon stocks throughout Alaska in recent years. The preseason forecast of 26,100 large king salmon does not allow for directed fisheries in either the U.S. or Canada on Taku River king salmon. Inseason abundance estimates produced starting the end of May will determine any directed king salmon fishing possibility.

For 2015, the preliminary terminal run forecast for Stikine River sockeye salmon is 171,200 fish, which constitutes a below average run. For comparison, the recent 10-year average (2005–2014) total Stikine sockeye run size is approximately 179,800 fish. Based on Canadian stock recruit and sibling forecasts, wild sockeye salmon returns to the Taku River are expected to total 216,000 fish which is above the recent 10-year average wild sockeye salmon terminal run size of approximately 171,400 fish. Enhanced sockeye salmon returns to the Taku River are expected to total 6,700 fish, similar to the recent 10-year average. Chilkoot Lake sockeye salmon returns are expected to be above average, and returns to Chilkat Lake are expected to be near average.

Douglas Island Pink and Chum, Inc. (DIPAC) has forecast 214,000 enhanced sockeye salmon returning to Snettisham Hatchery in 2015.

The projected regionwide forecast of hatchery chum salmon returns for 2015 is expected to be 7.9 million fish. This includes 2.1 million fish to four DIPAC locations, 2.2 million fish to three Northern Southeast Regional Aquaculture Association (NSRAA) locations, 2.9 million fish to four Southern Southeast Regional Aquaculture Association (SSRAA) locations, 0.5 million fish to Armstrong Keta Inc., 0.2 million fish to the Sitka Sound Science Center. A portion of these returns above broodstock needs and cost recovery harvests may be harvested in traditional drift gillnet fisheries in Districts 1, 6, 8, 11, and 15 as well as in terminal area drift gillnet fisheries in Boat Harbor, Deep Inlet, Anita Bay, Neets Bay, and Nakat Inlet. Chum salmon harvests in regional drift gillnet fisheries have averaged 2.6 million fish per year over the recent 10-year period from 2004 to 2013, and during this period, chum salmon have accounted for 58% of salmon harvested.

Returns of wild coho salmon are not forecasted but are expected to be consistent with the recent year averages. Alaska hatchery coho salmon contributions to drift gillnet fisheries in 2014 were estimated by hatchery operators at 189,000 fish (Vercessi 2015), around 34% of total drift gillnet coho salmon harvests. The largest portion of this harvest was from Neets Bay returns with substantial harvest from Neck Lake returns.

The Southeast Alaska pink salmon harvest forecast for 2015 is 58 million fish, with a range of 37 to 79 million fish. The major portion of the pink salmon harvest for the region is generally taken by purse seine gear. Drift gillnet harvests of pink salmon have recently averaged 3% of regional pink salmon harvests.

MANAGEMENT APPROACH

A flexible management approach is required because of the uncertainty of salmon run size to the drift gillnet fishing areas. This management plan presents only a general outlook as to how the season is expected to develop. Some specific management approaches may be altered depending on inseason assessments of salmon run strength. Gillnet fishermen are encouraged to contact ADF&G management staff listed at the end of this plan for more detailed information.

The primary objectives for management of the 2015 drift gillnet fishery are as follows:

1. Obtain overall salmon spawning escapements with the best possible distribution to all systems;
2. Provide for orderly fisheries while harvesting those salmon in excess of escapement objectives;
3. Promote the harvest and processing of good quality salmon within the constraints dictated by run size;
4. Manage for a total Southeast drift gillnet king salmon harvest ceiling of 2.9% of the all-gear quota, exclusive of Alaska hatchery-produced fish; the 2015 preseason Abundance Index is not yet available.
5. Minimize, to the extent possible, the harvest of salmon destined for locations where weak returns are expected;
6. Manage Districts 1, 6, 8, and 11 drift gillnet fisheries consistent with the provisions of the U.S./Canada Pacific Salmon Treaty (PST);

7. Manage hatchery THAs in accordance with provisions in THA management plans adopted by the Alaska Board of Fisheries (BOF);

Achievement of these management objectives will be accomplished by inseason adjustments of time and area to control harvests in specific areas in accordance with salmon run strength and timing. Comparisons of current year fishing performance to historical fishing success (i.e., catch per unit effort [CPUE] analysis) are a major component of inseason run strength assessment. This approach assumes catch rates are an accurate reflection of run strength by time period and can be relied upon as an indication of salmon escapements throughout the fishing area.

Past experience has demonstrated that management of salmon fisheries based only on fishery performance or CPUE, can be misleading, especially for mixed-stock fisheries. Therefore, other available run strength indicators will also be used including spawning escapements, stock composition estimates, test fishing, observed salmon concentrations in closed water areas, catches from other fisheries, and salmon run timing models.

The increasing availability of hatchery-produced salmon has become a major factor in the management of Southeast Alaska drift gillnet fisheries, including coho and summer chum salmon throughout the region and sockeye salmon in District 11. Where inseason management is based on fishery performance, it may be difficult to gauge natural stock run strength if significant numbers of hatchery fish are present in the catch. Where possible, the hatchery component of the catch will be separated when evaluating fishery performance and management decisions outside of terminal areas will be based on wild stocks.

WEEKLY FISHING ANNOUNCEMENTS

Inseason management of the District 1 drift gillnet fishery is conducted by the Ketchikan area management staff; Districts 6 and 8 by the Petersburg and Wrangell area staff; District 11 by the Juneau area staff; and District 15 by the Haines area staff. Because permit holders can move freely among all drift gillnet fisheries, the weekly fishing announcements will be issued to include all areas in the region. These will normally be released simultaneously in all area offices by mid-afternoon each Thursday during the fishing season.

WEEKLY FISHING PERIODS

Weekly fishing periods in most traditional areas can generally be expected to begin on Sundays at 12:01 p.m. When they occur, directed king salmon drift gillnet fisheries in District 8 open on Mondays at 8:00 a.m. and District 11 fisheries open on Mondays at 12:01 p.m., except following the Memorial Day Holiday when these fisheries open on Tuesday. Also to reduce gear conflicts, commercial fishing in District 8 will begin on Mondays for the first two weeks of sockeye management. Districts 6 and 8 are managed together due to their proximity. As a result, the District 6 weekly start day will be Monday for the first two weeks of the sockeye season. Fishing periods in hatchery THAs, including the Northern and Southern Southeast Regional Aquaculture Association's (NSRAA and SSRAA) terminal fisheries in Deep Inlet, Anita Bay, and Neets Bay will be in accordance with rotational harvest management plans for drift gillnet, seine, and troll fisheries adopted by the BOF.

FULL RETENTION

ADF&G will require full retention (5 AAC 39.265) of all salmon harvested in the Deep Inlet THA net fisheries from the onset of the 2015 season. This regulation may be implemented by emergency order in other areas of Southeast Alaska if necessary after consultation with the

Alaska Wildlife Troopers (AWT). Further details regarding the implementation of this regulation will be announced at later dates.

U.S./CANADA PACIFIC SALMON TREATY

The Pacific Salmon Treaty (PST) will influence management of Districts 1, 6, 8, and 11 drift gillnet fisheries [5 AAC 33.361]. The management provisions specified by the PST will be considered separately under the specific management plan for each respective fishery. Fishermen are encouraged to contact local ADF&G staff for more detailed information concerning Alaska's PST obligations under the 2009–2018 Transboundary River (TBR) Annex agreement.

KING SALMON

The need for management measures to comply with the drift gillnet harvest quota for king salmon will depend on inseason evaluation of king salmon catch rates relative to the 2.9 % drift gillnet allocation of the Treaty fish harvest ceiling [5 AAC 29.060]. For 2015, the all-gear Treaty king salmon allocation will be determined when a preseason Abundance Index is agreed upon. If the need arises, nighttime fishing closures may be implemented in certain areas to reduce the incidental catch of immature, "feeder" king salmon. Some management measures to limit the drift gillnet harvest of PST king salmon have been necessary in recent years, including time and area restrictions in the early weeks of the sockeye fishery in District 11.

The District 15 drift gillnet fishery will be managed in accordance with provisions in the *Lynn Canal and Chilkat River King Salmon Fishery Management Plan* [5 AAC 33.384]. Due to a very low forecast of Chilkat Lake king salmon in 2015, Chilkat Inlet will be closed to all fisheries through the first two weeks of the summer season.

Drift gillnet fisheries may target king salmon in Districts 8 and 11 if inseason estimates of abundance improve compared with preseason forecasts. Only historic base level catches will be counted towards the PST fish ceiling [5 AAC 29.060 (b)(2)] when directed fisheries occur.

TREE POINT AND PORTLAND CANAL FISHERY

INTRODUCTION

The Tree Point and Portland Canal drift gillnet fishing area consists of regulatory Sections 1-A and 1-B. This fishery targets summer chum and sockeye salmon early in the season, followed by pink salmon, and finally fall chum and coho salmon at the end of the season.

2015 OUTLOOK

Chum Salmon

Runs of summer chum salmon in southern Southeast Alaska were below average in 2014, with poor escapements to many of the index streams in the subregion. The index count of 42,000 chum salmon in the Southern Southeast Subregion was below the lower-bound sustainable escapement goal of 54,000 index fish. The estimated escapement of 6,279 summer chum salmon at Fish Creek near Hyder, was well below the long-term average of 25,000 fish (1971–2013) and was the 7th consecutive year of below-average escapement to the system. ADF&G will pay close attention to Portland Canal chum salmon, as well as the other summer chum salmon index streams in the Ketchikan area in 2015. In 2012, ADF&G began conducting helicopter surveys in key chum salmon index streams in the Ketchikan area. These surveys will again be conducted in 2015 and will focus on the peak of the summer chum run timing which occurs in late July to

mid-August. This survey method greatly enhances the accuracy of chum salmon counts at a time when large numbers of pink salmon make it difficult to enumerate other species from a fixed wing aircraft.

U. S./Canada Tree Point Fishery Agreement

In the spring of 2009, the United States and Canada re-negotiated a 10-year annex, 2009–2018, for the Tree Point fishery. There was no change to the District 1 drift gillnet portion of the PST and the agreement still calls for the following:

Manage the Alaska District 1 drift gillnet fishery to:

1. Achieve an annual catch share of Nass River sockeye salmon of 13.8% of the Annual Allowable Harvest (AAH) of the Nass River sockeye salmon stocks;
2. Carry forward from year to year annual deviations from the prescribed catch share arrangement.

Nass River Sockeye Salmon Annual Allowable Harvest

The AAH each year will be calculated as the total run of adult Nass River sockeye salmon in that year less the escapement target of 200,000 fish. In the event that the actual Nass River spawning escapement for the season is below the target level, the actual spawning escapement will be used in the AAH calculations.

The total run calculation includes the catches of Nass River sockeye salmon in the principal boundary area fisheries and the spawning escapement to the Nass River watershed. This includes the catch of Nass River sockeye salmon in Alaska Districts 1, 2, 3, 4, and 6 net fisheries, Canadian Areas 1, 3, 4, and 5 net fisheries, and Canadian Nass inriver fisheries.

Although the management intent shall be to harvest salmon at the AAH percentage, it is recognized that overages and underages will occur and an accounting mechanism is required. The payback mechanism for the fishery will be based on the number of fish a party is over or under its AAH.

The management intent for the fishery shall be to return any overages to a neutral or negative balance as soon as possible. After 5 years of consecutive overages, a management plan must be provided to the Northern Panel with specific management actions that will eliminate the overage. The accrual of underages is not intended to allow either Alaska or Canada to modify its fishing behavior in any given year, nor to harvest the accrued underage.

During the Pacific Salmon Commission meeting in January 2015, the bilateral Northern Panel and the Northern Boundary Technical Committee met and summarized preliminary run reconstruction of the Nass River for 2013 and 2014. The performance of the Tree Point drift gillnet fishery under the 1999 agreement is shown in Table 7. Preliminary reports indicate that the total sockeye salmon run to the Nass River in 2014 was 622,145 fish. That allowed for a harvest of approximately 58,256 Nass River sockeye salmon at Tree Point in 2014. Total sockeye harvest at Tree Point for 2014 was 55,828 sockeye salmon and of these, approximately 36,000 were Nass River sockeye.

The Canadian Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) has a preseason expectation for 2015 returns of approximately 727,000 Nass River sockeye salmon. If the forecast is accurate, then the AAH for Tree Point will be approximately 72,000 Nass River sockeye salmon.

Chum and Coho Enhancement

Hatchery returns of summer chum, fall chum, and coho salmon to SSRAA's enhancement projects are expected to again contribute substantially to the Tree Point drift gillnet fishery in 2015. Information concerning SSRAA forecast returns is included under the THA Fisheries section of this plan.

Pink Salmon

Pink salmon returns are expected to be excellent to southern Southeast Alaska in 2015. If the actual returns come back as forecasted, the Tree Point drift gillnet fishery may receive two-, four-, and five-day fishing weeks during periods of the *District 1 Pink Salmon Management Plan* (PSMP; 5 AAC 33.360).

The PSMP establishes drift gillnet fishing time in Section 1-B (Tree Point) in relation to District 1 purse seine fishing time when both gear types are concurrently harvesting the same pink salmon stocks. By regulation, the plan starts on the third Sunday in July (July 19, 2015) with the following fishing time schedule:

1. When the purse seine fishery is open for any portion of one day during a fishing week, the drift gillnet fishery must be open for 48 hours during the same fishing week;
2. When the purse seine fishery is open for any portion of two days during a fishing week, the drift gillnet fishery must be open for 96 hours during the same fishing week;
3. When the purse seine fishery is open for any portion of three or more days during a fishing week, the drift gillnet fishery must be open for 120 hours during the same week.

MANAGEMENT GOALS

Management goals specific to the 2015 Tree Point drift gillnet fishery are as follows:

1. Manage the fishery in accordance within the PSMP (5 AAC 33.360);
2. Manage the fishery consistent with the current provisions of the PST (5 AAC 33.361).

MANAGEMENT PLAN

The Tree Point gillnet fishery will open by regulation in Section 1-B for four days beginning at 12:01 p.m., Sunday, June 21, 2015. The length of subsequent fishing periods up to the start of the PSMP on July 19 will be based on the strength of wild stock sockeye and chum salmon returns to Alaska and Canadian waters. The effort levels at Tree Point will also influence the amount of time the fishery is given, up to the start of the District 1 PSMP.

As in recent years, the catch of hatchery-produced summer chum salmon returning to the Nakat Inlet release site will not be included in the evaluation of natural stock fishery performance. The contribution of Nakat Inlet chum salmon will be estimated by inseason analysis of otolith marked fish. Hatchery chum salmon have contributed as much as 90% of the weekly chum salmon harvest at Tree Point and as much as 70% of the total chum salmon harvest in recent years.

The PST requires that the harvest of natural stocks of chum salmon returning to Portland Canal streams be minimized to ensure adequate escapement of these stocks. As a result, no fishing should be expected in Section 1-A for Portland Canal chum salmon.

The Tree Point drift gillnet fishery will be managed according to the District 1 PSMP starting July 19, 2015. The overall pink salmon return to southern Southeast Alaska is expected to be excellent in 2015. If the returns come in as predicted, then beginning in mid-July through the end of August, Tree Point drift gillnetters can anticipate fishing periods of two, four, and five days.

Fall management at Tree Point starts after the end of the pink salmon season and varies depending on the strength of the pink salmon run. During the fall season, the Tree Point fishery targets primarily fall chum and coho salmon; little is known about the stock composition of the chum and coho salmon harvest at this time of the year. However, if the estimated exploitation rate of the Hugh Smith Lake coho salmon stock, which has reached 80% in some years, holds true for adjacent areas, then wild coho salmon stocks in the surrounding Tree Point area may benefit from a closing date at Tree Point of approximately September 20. Due to the uncertainties of the escapement levels of the stocks being harvested, the documented high exploitation rate of Hugh Smith Lake coho salmon in some years, and the preponderance of hatchery fish in the harvest, ADF&G will continue to take a conservative approach to the fall season at Tree Point. However, fishing periods will be allowed after September 20 if fishery performance data indicates above average returns of wild chum and coho salmon. During recent years, approximately 50% of the fall coho salmon and as much as 90% of the fall chum salmon have been hatchery fish. In addition to harvest at Tree Point, Nakat Inlet fish can be harvested in the Nakat Inlet THA, which remains open by regulation to commercial fishing through November 10, 2015.

Hugh Smith Lake Sockeye Salmon

ADF&G will continue to closely monitor Hugh Smith Lake sockeye salmon and if escapement levels are below what is needed to reach the lower bound of the escapement goal range of 8,000 fish, the department may consider the following actions:

1. In statistical weeks (SW) 29 and 30, the department may close that portion of the District 1 purse seine fishery east of a line from Quadra Point to Slate Island Light to Black Rock Light to a point on the mainland shore at 55°01.40′ N. latitude, 131°00.20′ W. longitude.
2. In SW 31, 32, and 33, the department may close that portion of the District 1 purse seine fishery east of a line from Foggy Point Light to Black Rock Light to the southernmost tip of Black Island, and close the northern portion of the Section 1-B drift gillnet fishery to one nautical mile south of the latitude of Foggy Point Light.

PRINCE OF WALES AND STIKINE FISHERIES

INTRODUCTION

The Prince of Wales (District 6) drift gillnet fishery occurs in the waters of northern Clarence Strait and Sumner Strait, in regulatory Sections 6-A, 6-B, 6-C, and portions of Section 6-D. The Stikine fishery encompasses the waters of District 8 surrounding the terminus of the Stikine River. Due to their proximity, management of these fisheries is interrelated, resulting in stocks being subject to harvest in both fisheries. Two distinct management areas exist within each district: the Frederick Sound (Section 8-A) and Wrangell (Section 8-B) portions of District 8, and the Sumner Strait (Section 6-A) and Clarence Strait (Sections 6-B, 6-C, and 6-D) portions of District 6. The harvest of terminal hatchery runs to the Crystal Lake and Anita Bay hatchery facilities will be discussed in the THA fisheries portion of this management plan.

2015 OUTLOOK

King Salmon

The preseason forecast of large Stikine king salmon in 2015 of 30,200 fish is not sufficient to allow directed commercial fisheries in District 8. A preseason forecast of this size yields a minimal U.S. AC of 210. An inseason run estimate is typically produced near the end of May. If the inseason abundance estimate indicates a larger, more manageable U.S. AC, then directed commercial fisheries may occur. Additionally, 15,000 enhanced king salmon returning to Anita Bay THA are expected to contribute to the District 8 gillnet harvest.

Sockeye Salmon

The 2015 Stikine River sockeye salmon run is expected to be below the previous 10-year average. The preliminary forecast of Stikine River sockeye salmon is 171,200 fish; which includes 81,500 Tahltan (47%), 34,000 enhanced Tuya (20%), and 55,700 wild mainstem (33%) sockeye salmon. Due to the near identical run timing of the Tahltan Lake and Tuya Lake stocks, any open fishing periods in District 8, and to a lesser extent in District 6, will be determined by the inseason abundance estimate of the Tahltan Lake run. Typically, the Tahltan Lake and Tuya Lake sockeye salmon run timing peaks in SW 27 (June 28–July 4) through the District 6 and 8 fisheries. During an average or above average Tahltan Lake run, substantial numbers of sockeye could be present as early as SW 24 (June 7–13) and as late as SW 31 (July 26–Aug 1).

Local area sockeye salmon stock returns are expected to be near average based on parent year escapements to local systems for 2015. The parent year escapement of sockeye salmon to McDonald Lake was within the goal range. However, the 2013 run fell well below expectations and escapement goals in 2014 were not met for the second year in a row.

Pink Salmon

Pink salmon typically begin entering District 6 in substantial numbers near the end of July. The Southeast Alaska pink salmon return has a forecasted harvest of 58 million fish in 2015, which is well above the recent 10-year average of 41 million fish. Parent year escapements for pink salmon stock groupings in both District 6 and 8 were within target ranges.

Chum Salmon

In Districts 6 and 8, there is no directed management of chum salmon, although they are caught incidentally in fisheries targeting sockeye, pink, and coho salmon. Chum salmon returning to Anita Bay, as well as Ketchikan area hatcheries, may result in increased harvests in Districts 6 and 8. Anita Bay is expecting a total run of 370,000 summer chum which is approximately 40,000 more than the 2014 run. Chum salmon returning to Anita Bay typically peak from SW 30 through 32 (July 19–Aug 8). Summer chum salmon production from Ketchikan area hatcheries is expected to be strong. Chum salmon returning to the Ketchikan area hatchery facilities migrate through District 6 and are expected to contribute to the total District 6 chum harvest.

Coho Salmon

Coho salmon runs for 2015 are expected to be above average. Forecasted returns to Neck Lake and Burnett Inlet are 90,000 and 23,000 coho salmon in 2015. The coho salmon return to Anita Bay is forecasted to be 47,000 fish, much higher than the 2014 return of 22,000 fish. The 2015 total forecasted Ketchikan area enhanced coho salmon run is 414,000 fish. Wild coho salmon

returns for 2015 are expected to be above the long-term average. Extended fishing periods in Districts 6 or 8 may occur beginning in SW 35 (August 23–29); however, fishing periods will be determined weekly based on wild coho salmon abundance.

MANAGEMENT GOALS

Management goals for the District 6 and District 8 drift gillnet fisheries for the 2015 season are as follows:

1. Achieve the Stikine River king salmon escapement goal while harvesting the Alaska share of the king salmon in excess of the goal;
2. Achieve the Stikine River escapement goals, particularly the Tahltan Lake sockeye salmon escapement goal, while harvesting the Alaska share of the Stikine River sockeye salmon in excess of the goal;
3. Achieve good spawning escapements of sockeye salmon in local Alaska systems;
4. Achieve pink salmon spawning escapement objectives in Districts 6 and 8;
5. Manage the District 6 and District 8 drift gillnet fisheries consistent with the provisions of the PST (5 AAC 33.361).

MANAGEMENT PLAN

King Salmon

Directed commercial fishing could occur beginning in late May if inseason run estimates for large Stikine River king salmon indicate a manageable U.S. AC. Directed king salmon gillnet openings would begin at 8:00 a.m. on Mondays, except during the week of Memorial Day when openings start on Tuesday. Opening length will be dependent upon expected fishing effort, expected king salmon harvest, and current inseason run size estimates from stock assessment projects. Inseason projections are predominantly derived from inriver mark/recapture studies conducted near Shakes Slough and just above the U.S./Canada border on the Stikine River.

Minimum mesh size is restricted to seven inches to minimize the incidental harvest of other species and is also restricted to 300 fathoms in length and 60 meshes in depth.

The “old Stikine closure line” would likely be utilized for the duration of a directed king salmon fishery in District 8. This line restricts fishing on, or near, the Stikine River flats by closing waters west of a line from Babbler Point to Hour Point, north of the Wrangell Island shoreline from Hour Point to Point Highfield, north and east of a line from Point Highfield to the southern end of Liesnoi Island to the southern end of Greys Island to the small island near the eastern entrance of Blind Slough to the nearest point of Mitkof Island, and south and east of a line from the prominent point of Mitkof Island nearest Coney Island to the northern end of Coney Island to a point 500 yards north of Jap Creek on the mainland shore.

The District 8 King Salmon Management Plan designates areas closed to drift gillnetting during a directed king salmon fishery. There are four areas that would be closed for the duration of a directed king fishery: Babbler Point, Wrangell Harbor, Bear Creek, and Point Frederick to Beacon Point. Additionally, if the gillnet fishery is open for two or more days, additional areas would close: Woodpecker Cove and “The Nose” on Woronkofski Island. These closures are designed to provide sport fishermen with exclusive fishing areas without interference from commercial fishing gear and/or to provide increased protection for steelhead returning to

Petersburg Creek and Bear Creek on Mitkof Island. Closed waters will be identified by news release prior to each potential opening. The closure from Point Frederick to Beacon Point will continue during the sockeye fishery to protect Petersburg Creek sockeye stocks.

In District 8, for the week before Memorial Day, the potential drift gillnet fishery may be limited to a maximum of two days to prevent conflicts with the king salmon derbies in Petersburg and Wrangell. There will be no openings on weekends or holidays to decrease any conflict with other user groups.

Drift gillnet fishermen are asked to notify management biologists, who will be monitoring the fishery, of any incidence of steelhead and any retained steelhead must be recorded on fish tickets.

King salmon less than 28 inches long that are harvested in the commercial drift gillnet fisheries may be retained and sold. King salmon less than 28 inches long, and those of Alaska hatchery origin, will not be counted against the Alaska all gear king salmon allocation. ADF&G will sample the harvest to identify hatchery origin, size composition, and age composition of the harvest.

Canada will prosecute a directed commercial king salmon fishery on the Stikine River in 2015. The preseason forecast of 26,050 king salmon provides Canada with an AC of 1,890. The harvest sharing agreement in the PST is based on a sliding scale. During large returns of king salmon to the Stikine River, the U.S. has a larger share of the Total Allowable Catch (TAC). During smaller returns, Canada has a larger share of the TAC. Additionally, the PST allows for 1,400 Stikine River king salmon to be harvested in an assessment fishery when the inseason forecast results in a small or no Canadian AC. When Canada is prosecuting a directed king salmon fishery, the assessment fishery is typically not necessary. Since 2005, the U.S. has harvested 78,500 and Canada has harvested 69,200 large Stikine king salmon.

Sockeye Salmon

By regulation, the sockeye salmon season can open as early as SW 24 at 12:00 noon, Monday, June 8. Directed sockeye fishing is dependent on the preseason forecast for Stikine River sockeye salmon abundance, specifically the Tahltan Lake component of the run. However, due to an average expected run of the Tahltan Lake component, directed sockeye salmon fishing will not occur until SW 25, Monday, June 15. Initial openings are expected to be 48 hours in Districts 6 and 8. Due to an expected average return of Tahltan sockeye salmon, extra fishing time may be warranted during the first 3–4 weeks of the sockeye season. If the run appears to be weaker than forecasted, restrictions will primarily limit fishing time in District 8 and fishery extensions in District 6 would likely not occur. Starting June 21, Districts 6 and 8 will revert to Sunday openings for the remainder of the season. Subsequent openings will be determined based on inseason catches and stock proportion data. If inseason catch and stock data indicate that the Tahltan sockeye salmon run is stronger than forecasted, more liberal fishing periods and/or mid-week openings may be allowed in District 8. Extended fishing time in District 6 will be based primarily on the abundance of sockeye salmon from local island stocks.

Sockeye salmon fishing in both districts will be managed in accordance with the TBR Annex of the PST. This Annex allows District 6 to be managed primarily for local Alaska sockeye salmon stocks. Management of District 8 is based on the harvest of sockeye salmon of Stikine River origin, as allowed by the sharing provisions of the TBR Annex and conservation needs.

Management actions during the sockeye salmon fishing season will be based on analysis of CPUE and stock specific data to determine the availability of Stikine River fish. These stock abundance indicators, along with fishery performance and stock composition data obtained from U.S. and Canadian fisheries, will be incorporated into the Stikine Sockeye Management Model (SSMM). As the season progresses, this model will be the primary method used to estimate availability of sockeye salmon for harvest by the Alaska drift gillnet fishery in District 8 and Canadian inriver fisheries. Any conservation measures required for Stikine River sockeye salmon are implemented first in District 8 and followed by Sumner Strait in District 6. Reductions in fishing time, area, or district-wide closures will be used when conservation measures are needed. All openings will be based upon the most recent SSMM update and current weekly sockeye salmon harvest.

The numbers of Stikine River sockeye generally begin to decrease in mid-July and other stocks, including McDonald Lake sockeye salmon, begin to pass through the fishery. McDonald Lake sockeye salmon escapements were below the escapement goal range in five of seven years from 2002 through 2008. Given this history, ADF&G recommended McDonald Lake sockeye salmon as a stock of concern as defined by the Sustainable Salmon Fishery Policy. An Action Plan for this stock was approved by the BOF in 2009. This plan limited fishing time to two days per week when McDonald Lake sockeye salmon are transiting through District 6 in SW 29 through 31. The McDonald Lake sockeye salmon stock was removed from stock of concern status by the BOF in 2012 because escapement goals were met the previous two seasons and escapements were on an upward trend. However, escapement goals have not been met for the past two years. Consequently, conservative measures may be taken during SW 29 through 31 in 2015.

Announcements of fishery extensions, or mid-week openings, will be made on the fishing grounds by 10:00 a.m. on the final day of the scheduled opening. Area and time during an extension may not be the same as the general weekly opening.

Pink Salmon

Pink salmon normally begin entering District 6 in substantial numbers in late July. Southeast Alaska pink salmon harvest is forecasted to be 58 million fish in 2015, which is well above the recent 10-year average. Early portions of the pink salmon fishery will be managed primarily on CPUE and parent year escapement. By mid-August, pink salmon destined for local systems will begin to enter the fishery in greater numbers and management will be based on observed escapements to local area streams. If escapements are not evenly dispersed throughout the district, area and/or time restrictions may occur.

Coho Salmon

Management for coho salmon typically begins in late August or early September. Management of the District 6 fishery will be based on wild coho stocks. Crystal Lake Hatchery, Burnett Inlet Hatchery, facilities in the Ketchikan area, Anita Bay remote release site, and Neck Lake remote release site at Whale Pass, all contribute coho salmon to Districts 6 and 8 fisheries. Inseason estimates from coded-wire-tag recovery data will be used to identify the hatchery component of the harvest.

Screen Island Shore Drift Gillnet

Regulation 5 AAC 33.310(c)(2)(B) allows drift gillnetting along the Screen Island shoreline of Etolin Island in Section 6-D. Specifically, this area encompasses those waters of Section 6-D

west of a line from Mariposa Rock Buoy to the northernmost tip of Point Harrington to a point on the shore of Etolin Island at 56°09.60′ N. latitude, 132°42.70′ W. longitude to the southernmost tip of Point Stanhope. Actions by the BOF in 2000, based on an agreement between drift gillnet and purse seine representatives, increased the fishing time for drift gillnetting in this area by one week on each end of the closure. The periods when fishing may be allowed are: from the second Monday in June (June 8) through the first Saturday in August (August 1), and from the first Sunday in September (September 6) until the season is closed. During this time, drift gillnetting is allowed during the same time periods that the adjoining waters of Section 6-C are open.

There may be additional opportunity for pink salmon in Section 6-D in August. Regulations were adopted by the BOF in March 2015 to allow drift gillnet fishing in the Screen Island portion of Section 6-D during regular drift gillnet openings between the first Saturday in August through the first Sunday in September if this area has been or will be open to purse seining. During these occasions, the gillnet fishery will open after the purse seine closes and will close at 11:59 p.m. the day before the next scheduled purse seine opening, or when the regular gillnet opening closes, whichever comes first. Drift gillnet fishermen wanting to fish in the Screen Island portion of Section 6-D during the month of August will need to closely monitor purse seine and subsequent drift gillnet news releases during this period. There will likely be short notice for fishing opportunities.

TAKU/SNETTISHAM GILLNET FISHERY

INTRODUCTION

The Taku/Snettisham (District 11) gillnet area encompasses Section 11-B (Taku Inlet, Port Snettisham, and Stephens Passage north of Midway Island) and Section 11-C (Midway Island south to a line from Point League to Point Hugh). This fishery has historically targeted sockeye salmon from late June to mid-August and fall chum and coho salmon from mid-August to mid-October. In recent decades, the fishery has harvested substantial numbers of hatchery summer chum and sockeye salmon. Directed king salmon fisheries may occur in District 11 when run strength is sufficient.

2015 OUTLOOK

King Salmon

The final 2015 preseason forecast of 26,100 large Taku River king salmon does not provide AC for either the U.S. or Canadian directed fisheries. DIPAC projects a 2015 total run of approximately 6,900 hatchery king salmon from their smolt release sites at Gastineau Channel, Auke Bay, and Fish Creek.

Sockeye Salmon

The terminal run of wild Taku River sockeye salmon in 2015 is expected to be 215,000 fish, above the recent 10-year average of 171,000 fish. This forecast is based on spawner-recruit analysis, sibling forecast, and recent trends in ocean survivals. The 2010 main parent year escapement of 87,400 wild fish and the 2011 parent year escapement of 113,000 wild fish were both above the upper bound of the 71,000-80,000 fish escapement goal range. Adult returns to date from the joint U.S./Canada Taku River sockeye salmon enhancement project at Tatsamenie

Lake have been low, and numbers of enhanced sockeye salmon returning to this system are not expected to contribute significantly to harvest in 2015.

Both the 2010 and 2011 parent year sockeye salmon escapements through the Speel Lake weir were within the 4,000–13,000 fish biological escapement goal range, at 5,643 and 4,777 fish, respectively. The Speel Lake escapement goal range was revised in 2014 to a sustainable escapement goal range of 4,000–9,000 fish. Beginning in 2005, DIPAC replaced the weir with side scan sonar to monitor salmon escapements into Crescent Lake. Although all species of salmon enter Crescent Lake, the majority are thought to be sockeye salmon. The 2005 to 2010 average sonar count was approximately 6,400 fish. Due to technical issues, the sonar monitoring program has been discontinued and Crescent Lake escapements will be monitored by aerial surveys in 2015.

The DIPAC 2015 forecast for enhanced sockeye salmon returning to Snettisham Hatchery is 214,000 fish, nearly identical to last year's total run estimate of 215,300 fish.

Chum Salmon

In 2015, approximately 629,000 summer chum salmon are forecast to return from DIPAC hatchery releases in Gastineau Channel, and 126,000 chum salmon from Limestone Inlet remote releases. The total estimated DIPAC chum salmon contribution to the Section 11-B drift gillnet fishery is forecast to be 395,000 fish. Returns of fall chum salmon to the Taku River are expected to be similar to recent seasons.

Pink Salmon

Returns of pink salmon to District 11 systems are expected to be near average in 2015. Parent year pink salmon escapements to District 11 met management targets although they were not as strong as many systems around Southeast Alaska in 2013. Pink salmon counted through the Taku River Canyon Island fish wheels in 2013 were 41% of the odd-year average indicating below-average escapement to the Taku River.

Coho Salmon

The 2015 run of Taku River coho salmon is expected to be below average. The total run forecast, based on the relationship between smolt tagging CPUE and historical run size, is 158,500 adult fish, equating to an inriver run of 99,900 coho salmon. This compares to the recent 10-year average inriver run of 110,200 fish. DIPAC projects a 2015 return of approximately 72,000 hatchery coho salmon from their smolt releases into Gastineau Channel.

MANAGEMENT GOALS

Management goals for the 2015 Taku/Snettisham drift gillnet fishery are as follows:

1. Provide for sufficient salmon spawning escapements to Taku River, Port Snettisham, and Stephens Passage streams while harvesting those fish in excess of escapement needs;
2. Monitor the incidental harvest of king salmon to stay within the BOF Southeast drift gillnet allocation of 2.9% of the Treaty king salmon quota;
3. Manage the fishery consistent with current provisions of the PST (5 AAC 33.361);
4. Maximize the harvest of hatchery-produced chum salmon returning to Limestone Inlet while minimizing the incidental harvest of Port Snettisham wild sockeye salmon;

5. Manage the return of enhanced Port Snettisham sockeye salmon consistent with the *District 11: Snettisham Hatchery Salmon Management Plan* (5 AAC 33.378);
6. Manage the Speel Lake sockeye salmon run to achieve an escapement to the lake between 4,000 and 9,000 spawners;
7. Manage the District 11 directed king salmon fishery to harvest large adult king salmon in accordance with the PST Treaty and the District 11 king salmon management plan.

MANAGEMENT PLAN

The District 11 gillnet fishery will be managed in accordance with the TBR Annex of the PST. Harvest sharing arrangements for king, sockeye, and coho salmon through the 2015 fishing season are specified in the annex.

King Salmon

The below-average preseason forecast requires a conservative management approach for the 2015 Taku River king salmon run. The forecast does not provide any allowed catch for U.S. fisheries in early May, and any possible fishery opportunities will depend on inseason estimates of run strength generated by the joint U.S./Canada inriver assessment project. Based on recent trends of king salmon abundance, directed fisheries are unlikely throughout the spring. Mesh size restriction and reduction in open area may be implemented during the initial weeks of the traditional sockeye salmon season if observed run strength warrants. The first inseason abundance estimates derived from the inriver mark-recapture data may be available in middle to late May. Should the run size estimate increase substantially providing a directed fishery opportunity, a news release will be issued announcing specific fishery details.

Sockeye Salmon

Section 11-B will open for directed sockeye salmon fishing on the third Sunday in June (June 21) for a three-day fishing period, unless king salmon run strength is poor and conservation measures are required. Subsequent openings will be based on inseason fishery performance and stock assessment information.

The District 11 fishery will be managed through mid-August primarily on the basis of sockeye salmon abundance. Run strength will be evaluated using fishery catch and CPUE data, and weekly inriver run size estimates derived from the Taku River fish wheel mark-recapture project operated at Canyon Island. Contribution of enhanced stocks of sockeye salmon will be estimated inseason by analysis of salmon otoliths sampled from the commercial harvests. The age and stock compositions of the commercial harvest of wild sockeye salmon will be estimated after the fishing season by scale pattern and GSI analysis.

The returns of enhanced Port Snettisham sockeye salmon will be managed according to the *District 11: Snettisham Hatchery Salmon Management Plan* (5 AAC 33.378). The plan provides basic guidelines for managing enhanced sockeye salmon production from Port Snettisham including the following provisions, in order of priority:

1. Sustainable production of wild sockeye salmon from Crescent and Speel Lakes;
2. Manage enhanced Port Snettisham sockeye salmon returns in a manner that does not prevent achieving escapement goals or PST harvest sharing agreements for Taku River salmon stocks;

3. Assessment programs shall be conducted to estimate Port Snettisham wild sockeye salmon stock escapements and contributions of enhanced sockeye salmon to the District 11 commercial fishery;
4. Common property harvests in the Speel Arm SHA shall be conducted by limiting time and area to protect wild sockeye salmon returns.

Management of the fishery in Stephens Passage will focus on conservation of wild Port Snettisham sockeye salmon stocks, particularly in July. The department intends to implement a six-inch minimum gillnet mesh size restriction in Section 11-B south of Circle Point in order to limit harvest rates on wild Port Snettisham sockeye salmon while allowing harvest of enhanced chum salmon returning to the Limestone Inlet remote release site. The mesh restriction in Section 11-B may be relaxed at the end of July or after the peak migration timing of wild Port Snettisham sockeye salmon stocks through Stephens Passage.

A personal use fishery will be allowed in Sweetheart Creek to ensure enhanced sockeye salmon returns to this site are fully utilized. Sweetheart Creek is naturally blocked to anadromous fish migration several hundred yards upstream from the mouth. The Sweetheart Creek personal use fishery will be open seven days per week.

In order to avoid conflicts with sport fisheries, the District 11 drift gillnet fishery will not be open concurrent with the 2015 Juneau Golden North Salmon Derby (August 14–16). Consequently, during SW 34, the District 11 gillnet fishery will not open until Monday, August 17.

Pink Salmon

Pink salmon will be harvested in Section 11-B incidental to sockeye and enhanced summer chum salmon fisheries. Fishing time for a directed pink salmon fishery in Section 11-C will depend upon the strength of pink salmon returns to lower Stephens Passage, Seymour Canal, and the northern portions of District 10. Returns will be closely monitored and if surpluses are present, openings may occur in August.

Coho and Fall Chum

Beginning in mid-August, management of the Taku/Snettisham drift gillnet fishery will be based primarily on the run strength of returning Taku River coho, as well as fall chum salmon. In 2015, a point escapement goal of 70,000 Taku River coho salmon with a range of 50,000–90,000 fish was adopted by the TBR Panel. Similar to the past several seasons, Canada may harvest all coho salmon that pass above the border in excess of both the point escapement goal and a 5,000 fish assessment fishery. The District 11 fishery will be managed to provide a minimum above border run of 75,000 coho salmon. Inseason management will be based on evaluation of the fishery catch, effort, and CPUE relative to historical levels, inriver run size estimates from the Taku River mark-recapture project, and recovery of coded-wire-tagged wild Taku River and hatchery coho salmon in marine fisheries.

LYNN CANAL GILLNET FISHERY

INTRODUCTION

The Lynn Canal drift gillnet fishery operates in the waters of District 15. The district is divided into three regulatory sections: 15-A (upper Lynn Canal), 15-B (Berners Bay), and 15-C (lower Lynn Canal). The Lynn Canal drift gillnet fishery targets sockeye, summer chum, pink, coho, and fall chum salmon. King salmon are taken incidentally.

Historically, this fishery targets sockeye, coho, and fall chum salmon from June through late September. In recent decades, the fishery has targeted large returns of hatchery chum salmon originating from remote hatchery release projects at Amalga Harbor and Boat Harbor.

Sockeye salmon are targeted from June through early September. The primary stocks originate from Chilkat Lake, Chilkoot Lake, Berners Bay rivers, and mainstem spawning areas of the Chilkat River. Hatchery and wild summer chum salmon are harvested from late June through early August. Fall chum and coho salmon are targeted from September through early October. The primary fall chum salmon stocks originate in the Klehini and Chilkat rivers. Major coho salmon stocks originate from the Chilkat and Berners Bay river systems.

The Chilkoot River weir and Chilkat River fish wheel stock assessment projects will be operational beginning in the first week of June. Sockeye salmon escapement to Chilkat Lake will be assessed with a DIDSON (dual frequency identification sonar) system. This equipment has enabled department crews to monitor Chilkat Lake salmon escapement during flow reversals, weather events, and during periods of high boat traffic. Total escapement for Chilkat Lake sockeye salmon is determined by this project.

MANAGEMENT GOALS

The overall management goal is to achieve desired spawning escapement levels while harvesting the available surplus for a long-term maximum sustainable yield of all Lynn Canal salmon stocks. Escapement to Chilkoot Lake is monitored by a weir located on the outlet of Chilkoot Lake. Escapements to Chilkat River and Chilkat Lake are monitored using fish wheels operated in the lower Chilkat River. Other stocks in the general Lynn Canal area are monitored by aerial surveys, foot surveys, or mark-recapture methods. Specific management goals for the 2015 Lynn Canal drift gillnet fishery and formal escapement goals are as follows:

1. Obtain an escapement of between 38,000 and 86,000 (weir count units) sockeye salmon to Chilkoot Lake.
2. Obtain an escapement of between 70,000 and 150,000 sockeye salmon to Chilkat Lake. The escapement will be monitored in season by the lower Chilkat River fish wheel project and the final escapement will be derived from DIDSON counts at the outlet of Chilkat Lake.
3. Obtain an escapement of between 1,750 and 3,500 three-ocean age and older king salmon to the Chilkat River.
4. Obtain an escapement of between 75,000 and 250,000 fall chum salmon to the Chilkat River.
5. Obtain a peak foot escapement count between 4,000 and 9,200 coho salmon to Berners River.

6. Obtain a peak index stream count for Chilkat River drainage coho salmon that corresponds to a total escapement of 30,000 to 70,000 fish.
7. Provide for sufficient chum, coho, and pink salmon spawning escapements to the Chilkat, Chilkoot, and Berners Rivers and other Lynn Canal systems while harvesting those fish in excess of escapement needs.
8. Harvest all DIPAC hatchery-produced chum salmon available in the Boat Harbor Terminal Harvest Area while conserving wild stock pink and summer chum salmon migrating to streams on the western shoreline of Lynn Canal and other wild stocks originating in upper Lynn Canal.

2015 Outlook

Sockeye Salmon

An average return of Chilkat Lake sockeye salmon is expected in 2015. Escapements during parental years were above the upper end of the escapement goal range during 2009 but below the range in 2010 (153,000 and 62,000 fish respectively). Chilkat Lake zooplankton abundance in 2010 and 2011, important lake rearing years for the 2015 adult sockeye salmon return, were the highest since 1998. On average, 71% of the Chilkat Lake sockeye salmon escapements are 3-ocean age fish (34% are age-1.3, 37% are age-2.3, and 0.5% are age-3.3 fish). Approximately 27% of this run has spent two years in the marine environment, or 2-ocean age fish, (5% are age-1.2 and 22% are age-2.2). The age composition of the 2014 run of 2-ocean age fish was slightly above the previous 10-year average and may indicate an average return of 3-ocean age fish in 2015.

Sockeye returns for 2015 are not formal forecasts but may be characterized as general expectations based on escapement, age composition, and lake rearing conditions. Due to expected average returns of Chilkat Lake sockeye salmon, the department will implement management decisions in the commercial drift gillnet salmon fishery to achieve target escapement levels within the escapement goal range for this stock.

The 2015 Chilkat River mainstem sockeye salmon run is expected to be above average in run strength. Mark-recapture estimates of the Chilkat River mainstem sockeye salmon escapements in 2010, 2011, and 2012 (the dominant parent-years), were 34,000, 31,000, and 47,000 fish, respectively. Escapement estimates were near the historical average of 33,400 fish for older brood years and well above average in 2012. The dominant age classes for this run are age-0.2 (25%), age-0.3 (41%), and age-1.3 (20%) fish. The proportion of age-0.2 fish in the 2014 escapement was above average indicating that the 2015 return of age-0.3 fish to the mainstem Chilkat River may also be above average in run strength. The Lower Chilkat River fish wheel project has been providing inseason stock assessment and post-season escapement estimates of Chilkat River mainstem sockeye salmon since 1994.

Returns of Chilkoot Lake sockeye salmon in 2015 are expected to be above average. The Chilkoot Lake sockeye salmon escapement count during the dominant parental brood year (2010) for the 2015 return was 72,000 fish, well within the sustainable escapement goal range of 38,000-86,000 fish. The composition of age-1.2 fish in the 2014 escapement (19.3%) was well above average (12.6%). This information may indicate a robust return of age-1.3 fish in 2015; in addition, results from the department's Chilkoot River smolt study in the spring of 2012 indicated very large numbers of out-migrating sockeye salmon smolt that year. Zooplankton abundance during 2011, the year the majority of the sockeye fry reared in Chilkoot Lake, was

also above the previous 5-year average. This indicates good forage supply for rearing Chilkoot Lake sockeye salmon juveniles contributing to the 2015 return.

Management decisions will be based on inseason escapement data and site specific sampling results from the District 15 drift gillnet fishery.

An above average run of Berners Bay sockeye salmon is expected in 2015 for similar reasons as the above average Chilkat River mainstem sockeye projection. Berners Bay Rivers and Chilkat River mainstem sockeye stocks share very similar life histories and both stocks shared similar average age composition and parental year escapements for the dominant brood years for the 2015 run. Total escapement estimates are not available for Berners Bay sockeye salmon systems as escapements are assessed via aircraft survey. Peak aerial escapement estimates to Berners Bay streams were generally near average for all brood years. The 2011 and 2012 commercial harvests of Berners Bay and Chilkat River mainstem sockeye salmon were estimated at 21,500 and 45,000 fish respectively. These harvests are near the recent 10-year average harvest of 24,000 fish in 2011 and well above average in 2012.

Summer Chum Salmon

The majority of the summer chum salmon production in the district is from hatchery releases from the Amalga Harbor Special Harvest Area and the Boat Harbor Terminal Harvest Area (BHTHA) by Douglas Island Pink and Chum Inc. (DIPAC). DIPAC has been enhancing the chum salmon returns to Lynn Canal since 1987. The preseason total run forecast for enhanced chum salmon to Lynn Canal is 1.35 million fish. The expected run is well below the recent average of 2.5 million fish. Separate run estimates by release site are not possible as all chum salmon released have the same thermal mark.

Smaller numbers of wild summer chum salmon are produced from local area streams such as Sawmill Creek and other Berners Bay rivers on the eastern side of Lynn Canal. The Endicott, Beardslee, and St. James Bay rivers on the western side of Lynn Canal are also important contributors to the wild summer chum harvest in the drift gillnet fishery. These streams are part of the northern southeast inside index stream group.

The northern southeast inside summer chum salmon index counts during the important brood years (2010 and 2011) for the 2015 returns were 77,000 and 125,000 fish, respectively. These index counts were below the lower-bound sustainable escapement goal of 119,000 in 2010 and above this goal in 2011.

Based on parental-year escapement counts, the wild summer chum salmon run in 2015 may be well below average in run strength.

Fall Chum Salmon

The 2015 run of Chilkat River drainage fall chum salmon stock is expected to be near average. Peak aerial escapement survey counts were 8,000 and 32,000 fish during 2010 and 2011, important brood years for the 2015 run. Counts were well below the peak aerial escapement count average of 24,000 fish in 2010 and above average in 2011. The total drainage-wide estimated escapement in 2010 and 2011 based on mark-recapture index methods was 91,000 and 368,000 chum salmon. These estimates are below average for 2010 and well above average for 2011. A conservative approach will be implemented in the 2015 fall season in Chilkat Inlet to ensure escapements of Chilkat River drainage fall chum salmon are within escapement targets.

The commercial harvest during the dominant parental brood years (2010 and 2011) were both near the recent average. Generally, escapements of Klehini River and Chilkat River fall chum salmon stocks have been trending upward from historical lows during the mid to late 1990s. Fish wheel counts and aerial escapement surveys in recent years have indicated an increasing trend in abundance for this stock. Results of a study conducted from 2002 to 2005 indicated that the total fish wheel catch is approximately 1.55% of the total number of fall chum salmon returning to the Chilkat River drainage.

Coho Salmon

The Chilkat River drainage coho salmon return is expected to be average during 2015. Coho salmon systems in the district include the Chilkat River, Berners River, and Chilkoot River. Parent-year survey counts at the Chilkat River tributaries and Chilkoot River drainage were generally average. The 2011 and 2012 escapements to Berners Bay (6,050 and 5,500) were within the escapement goal range of 4,000 to 9,200 fish.

Sport Fish Division has been conducting coho salmon smolt coded-wire tagging (CWT) studies on the Chilkat River to estimate smolt size, age structure, production of coho salmon smolts, and marine survival of adult coho salmon since 1999. The 2011 and 2012 Chilkat River fish wheel catches of 1,600 and 1,000 coho were below the 2005–2014 average for both years. Chilkat River index stream escapements for coho salmon in 2011 and 2012 were 66,600 and 38,400 fish respectively. These escapement counts were both within the escapement goal range of 30,000–70,000 fish. Estimates of harvest were below the previous 10-year average for both brood years. Expectations for Lynn Canal coho stocks are based on recent marine survival trends, escapement estimates, and fish wheel catch.

King Salmon

The 2015 preseason inriver abundance forecast for large (≥ age 1.3) Chilkat River king salmon is estimated to be below the inriver abundance goal range of 1,850 to 3,600 fish. Since the preseason forecast is projected to be below the inriver abundance goal range, Chilkat Inlet, in the early weeks of the season, will be managed for king salmon escapement. Chilkat Inlet will remain closed to all fisheries north of the latitude of Seduction Point or the latitude of the southernmost tip of Talsani Island depending on sockeye and king salmon run strength as indicated by the lower Chilkat River fish wheel and drift gillnet projects.

Pink Salmon

The department is projecting a large return of pink salmon to Southeast Alaska in 2015. The ADF&G formal forecasted harvest of 58 million pink salmon in Southeast Alaska in 2015 is well above average. If returns of pink salmon to Lynn Canal are as expected, the department will consider opening areas within District 15 to harvest excess pink salmon.

MANAGEMENT PLAN

In 2015, ADF&G intends to manage the summer Lynn Canal drift gillnet fishery to obtain escapements within the established escapement goal ranges for all salmon stocks. Area, time, and gear restrictions will be in place during the first two or three weeks of the summer season to protect projected poor returns of Chilkat River king salmon.

The department intends to manage the fishery to minimize harvest of wild stock summer chum salmon while harvesting returns of hatchery chum salmon in Section 15-C. The fall Lynn Canal drift gillnet fishery will be managed to conserve Klehini River (early-run) fall chum salmon while providing opportunity to harvest Chilkat River fall chum and coho salmon if run strength indicates a harvestable surplus based on the size of the run as measured in the lower Chilkat River fish wheels.

Section 15-A

Section 15-A will open for two days beginning at 12:01 p.m., Sunday, June 21 (SW 26) in the waters of Lynn Canal, south and east of a line at the southernmost tip of Talsani Island to Eldred Rock Light to a point two nautical miles from the eastern shoreline at the latitude of Sherman Rock. A maximum mesh size restriction of 6 inches will be in place through June 28. During the first two weeks of the season, the western shoreline of Section 15-A including Chilkat Inlet will be closed to protect returning Chilkat River king salmon. Time, area, and gear restrictions will be in place to reduce the harvest rate on Chilkat River king salmon spawners. If inseason projections for Chilkoot and Chilkat Lake sockeye salmon early in the season are poor, Chilkat and Chilkoot Inlets may remain closed until escapements improve and are projected to meet escapement objectives. In SW 27, all of section 15-A south of the latitude of Seduction Point may be opened to harvest sockeye salmon. Chilkat Lake sockeye salmon run strength as measured by the lower Chilkat River fish wheel project will dictate commercial fishery openings in Chilkat Inlet. If escapements of sockeye salmon to Chilkat Lake are poor, the northern boundary line may be moved to south of Seduction Point for most of the summer season to boost sockeye salmon escapement to Chilkat Lake.

ADF&G is forecasting an above average run of sockeye salmon to Chilkoot Lake, an average run to Chilkat Lake, and above average Chilkat River mainstem sockeye salmon run in 2015. Decisions will be dictated by the results of various inseason stock assessment programs operating on the Chilkat and Chilkoot River drainages. Fishing opportunity is expected to be limited in Chilkat Inlet and western Lynn Canal early in 2015 to conserve Chilkat River king salmon early in the season and may be restricted for fall chum salmon late in the season if necessary. If the inseason information system indicates that the Chilkoot Lake sockeye salmon run is not projected to meet minimum escapement goals, restrictions in time and area of eastern and northern Section 15-A will be implemented until the department can project sockeye escapement within desired goal ranges. Six-inch minimum mesh size gear restrictions may be in place to reduce the harvest rate on Chilkoot Lake sockeye salmon during the summer and early fall season if necessary. Information gathered from the Chilkoot River weir program and from the commercial fishery will be used to judge run strength inseason for Chilkoot River sockeye salmon stocks.

The Chilkat mainstem sockeye salmon run overlaps with Chilkat Lake sockeye salmon and peaks in early to mid-July followed by late run Chilkat Lake sockeye salmon, which typically dominate the sockeye run during mid to late August. Run timing is tied to freshwater age: mainstem sockeye salmon are predominantly freshwater age-0, Chilkat Lake early run fish are predominantly age-1, and Chilkat Lake late run fish are predominantly age-2.

Fall fishery management in Section 15-A will begin in SW 34. As in recent years, the northern boundary line in Section 15-A may move northward in stages as the coho and fall chum stocks begin to migrate to parental streams. Depending on effort levels, and coho and fall chum salmon

run strength, fishing opportunity in Section 15-A may be similar to openings in recent years. Fishermen are reminded that any extensions in fishing time during the fall season could be announced with little advanced notice as requested by industry during drift gillnet task force meetings. Extensions in fishing opportunity will be based on results of inriver stock assessment and projected escapement in comparison to escapement goals.

Section 15-B

During years of high coho salmon abundance, openings in Section 15-B (south of the latitude of Cove Point) occurred for two or three days per week from SW 38 through the end of the season. Inseason information collected from coded-wire-tag recoveries and commercial harvest from various gear types will provide the data to manage fishing opportunity in Section 15-B. Since the preseason forecast is for an average return of coho salmon for Berners Bay streams, it is unlikely that openings within Berners Bay will occur in 2015.

Section 15-C

Section 15-C will open for two days beginning at 12:01 p.m., Sunday, June 21, south of the latitude of Point Bridget on the eastern shoreline and south of Danger Point on the western shoreline. A maximum mesh size restriction of 6 inches will be in place through June 28.

Due to average expected returns of Chilkat Lake sockeye salmon and above average Chilkoot Lake sockeye salmon returns, open fishing time in Section 15-C will be limited to 2 or 3 days in the summer season, except for the Boat Harbor Terminal Harvest Area (BHTHA). If inseason projections for the Chilkat or Chilkoot Lake sockeye salmon runs are below the escapement goal range, it is possible that additional time, area, and gear restrictions will be placed in Section 15-C during the summer season to boost escapement of sockeye salmon to desired levels.

To provide adequate escapements for northbound wild salmon stocks while providing opportunity to harvest enhanced chum salmon, some openings may be limited to the small area in eastern Section 15-C (known as the "postage stamp area") and defined as:

> The waters of Section 15-C from the eastern shoreline of Lynn Canal at the latitude of Vanderbilt Reef Light to Vanderbilt Reef Light and east of a line from Vanderbilt Reef Light to Little Island Light.

Depending on effort and escapement levels, this area could open on the 3rd and/or 4th day during peak weeks (SW 27–31) of the hatchery chum salmon run. This strategy will be used to provide opportunity to harvest summer chum salmon while reducing the harvest of northbound wild salmon stocks migrating through Section 15-C, if deemed necessary. The decision to use this strategy will be considered inseason based on Chilkat River fish wheel counts, Chilkoot Lake weir counts, aerial survey results, and results from site-specific sampling of the commercial fishery. If the District 15 wild northbound sockeye salmon return is poor, openings in eastern Section 15-C could be limited to just the postage stamp area.

The BHTHA will be opened for extended periods beginning in SW 28, (July 5). Management of this THA is described under the heading **DOUGLAS ISLAND PINK AND CHUM, INC. TERMINAL AREA FISHERIES**.

Fall season management will begin in SW 34 (August 17) in Section 15-C. Management of Section 15-C during the fall season will be based on overall coho and fall chum salmon run strength and fishing effort levels. Commercial fishing effort will be directed at harvesting coho

and fall chum salmon in Section 15-C in excess of escapement needs. Fishing time will more likely be limited from two to three days each week in the fall season. Any extensions to area or fishing time in the fall season will depend on the results of various stock assessment projects in the Chilkat and Chilkoot watersheds. Extensions could be announced without advance notice during the fall season if salmon run strength warrants.

In order to avoid conflicts with sport fisheries, the District 15 drift gillnet fishery will not be open concurrent with the 2015 Juneau Golden North Salmon Derby (August 14–16). Consequently, during SW 34, the District 15 drift gillnet fishery will not open until Monday, August 17.

As in previous years, ADF&G management crews, as part of the marine fishery performance project, will be on the fishing grounds during commercial fishing periods to sample sockeye and king salmon and to monitor the fishery during each opening. ADF&G requests that commercially harvested sockeye and king salmon are retained in separate fish holds or totes so department staff can collect scale and length data from salmon while on the grounds monitoring the fishery. The sockeye salmon scale samples that are collected from the commercial drift gillnet fishery form the basis of our stock separation analysis which is very important for the management of this fishery. ADF&G vessels stand by on channel 10 VHF when on the fishing grounds.

TERMINAL HARVEST AREA FISHERIES

During the 2015 season, drift gillnet terminal area fisheries can be expected in Deep Inlet, Neets Bay, Nakat Inlet, Anita Bay, Speel Arm, and Boat Harbor to harvest salmon returning to DIPAC, NSRAA, and SSRAA enhancement facilities.

NORTHERN SOUTHEAST REGIONAL AQUACULTURE ASSOCIATION TERMINAL AREA FISHERIES

The terminal hatchery fishery at Deep Inlet will be managed jointly with NSRAA and according to the BOF management plan. The open drift gillnet fishing times and any modifications of the terminal fishing area will be announced by ADF&G news release prior to and during the fishing season.

Deep Inlet Terminal Harvest Area—[5 AAC 33.376]

NSRAA expects runs of 1,336,000 chum, 27,500 king, and 18,000 coho salmon to the Deep Inlet remote release site and the Medvejie Hatchery in 2015. This season 90,000 chum salmon are needed for broodstock and no cost recovery is expected to occur. The majority of the common property harvest can be expected to take place in the Deep Inlet THA by drift gillnet and purse seine gear, but some harvest is likely to occur outside the THA by troll and purse seine gear as well.

The Deep Inlet THA fishery will be managed in accordance with the *District 13: Deep Inlet Terminal Harvest Area Salmon Management Plan* (5 AAC 33.376). The plan provides for distributing the harvest of hatchery-produced salmon between the purse seine and drift gillnet fleets. The BOF, during its March 2015 meeting, passed regulations requiring the time ratio for drift gillnet openings to purse seine openings as 2:1 for the 2015 – 2017 seasons; except from the third Sunday in June through statistical week 30, the time ratio for drift gillnet openings to purse seine openings is 1:1. However, if the postseason preliminary enhanced salmon harvest value

data from the previous season indicates the purse seine gear group is within its enhanced salmon allocation percentage range, based on the five-year rolling average as described in 5 AAC 33.364, the time ratio for drift gillnet openings to purse seine openings is 2:1 for the entire season. The BOF also allowed trolling to occur when net fisheries are closed.

During king salmon management (June 1 to June 20), drift gillnet fishing is scheduled on Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays, and purse seine fishing is scheduled on Sundays and Wednesdays. During the first portion of chum salmon management (June 21 thru July 25) drift gillnet fishing is scheduled on Mondays, Tuesdays, and Wednesdays, and purse seine fishing is scheduled on Sundays, Thursdays, and Fridays. During the second portion of chum management (July 26 thru October 3), drift gillnet fishing is scheduled on Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays, and purse seine fishing is scheduled on Sundays and Wednesdays. Details of the rotational fishery schedule for Deep Inlet were announced in an ADF&G News Release on April 3, 2015.

The NSRAA board has requested that the common property rotational fishery begin May 31 in order to provide for common property harvest of king salmon returning to the Medvejie Hatchery. NSRAA expects a return of 27,500 king salmon to Medvejie Hatchery this season. THA rotational gear fisheries with four days of drift gillnet and two days of purse seine per week are scheduled to begin for drift gillnet gear on Monday, June 1, and continue through Friday, June 19.

Regulations allow ADF&G to require that commercial drift gillnets fished in the Deep Inlet THA prior to July 1 have a minimum mesh size of six inches. In 2015, drift gillnet fishermen will be required to fish with a minimum mesh size of six inches prior to June 21. The purpose of the minimum mesh restriction is to reduce the harvest of local wild sockeye salmon returning to Silver Bay that are passing through the Deep Inlet THA.

NSRAA does not anticipate conducting cost recovery this season, therefore a midseason closure of the Deep Inlet rotational fisheries is not likely.

The Deep Inlet THA is described as follows:

> **Deep Inlet THA**: Deep Inlet, Aleutkina Bay, and contiguous waters south of a line from a point west of Pirates Cove at 135°22.63′ W. longitude, 56°59.35′ N. latitude to the westernmost tip of Long Island to the easternmost tip of Long Island to the westernmost tip of Emgeten Island to the westernmost tip of Error Island to the westernmost tip of Berry Island to the southernmost tip of Berry Island to the westernmost tip of the southernmost island in the Kutchuma Island group to the easternmost tip of the southernmost island in the Kutchuma Island group to the westernmost tip of an unnamed island at 135°17.67′ W. longitude, 57°00.30′ N. latitude to a point on the southern side of the unnamed island at 135°16.78′ W. longitude, 57°00.08′ N. latitude and then to a point on the Baranof Island Shore at 135°16.53′ W. longitude 56°59.93′ N. latitude with the following restrictions: all waters of Sandy Cove and Leesofskaia Bay will be closed. The Deep Inlet THA west of 135°20.75′ W. longitude will be closed to purse seine and drift gillnet gear beginning with the first emergency order of the season through the third Saturday in June.

In order to promote full utilization of salmon, to prevent waste of salmon, to determine harvest patterns of incidentally harvested coho and sockeye salmon, and to allow full and accurate

reporting of returns, the Deep Inlet THA fishery will be managed in 2015 by emergency order under authority of 5 AAC 39.325, *Full Retention and Utilization of Salmon*. This requires that all salmon harvested in net fisheries are retained, utilized, and reported on fish tickets whether they are sold or retained for personal use.

In early September, the Deep Inlet THA boundaries may be adjusted by ADF&G to reduce interception of wild coho salmon returning to Salmon Lake or hatchery coho salmon returning to Medvejie Hatchery needed for broodstock. THA boundary adjustments to protect coho salmon will be based on historic run timing and inseason observations of abundance. Since voluntary compliance with reporting of coho salmon in the Deep Inlet Terminal Harvest Area fishery has, in the past, been poor, and the department needs detailed information on coho and sockeye salmon harvest patterns, personnel from ADF&G or AWT may board some vessels and conduct hold inspections to ensure compliance or department staff may board some vessels in order to sample marked coho for coded wire tags.

Fishermen are reminded to be respectful of the rights of property owners who reside in the vicinity of the Deep Inlet THA. If complaints occur and are substantiated during the 2014 season, then the department, after consultation with NSRAA, may respond to complaints by changing scheduled fishing times or fishing boundaries of the Deep Inlet THA.

SOUTHERN SOUTHEAST REGIONAL AQUACULTURE ASSOCIATION TERMINAL AREA FISHERIES

The terminal hatchery fisheries at Neets Bay, Nakat Inlet, and Anita Bay will be managed jointly with SSRAA in accordance with management plans adopted by the BOF. The open drift gillnet fishing times will be announced via news releases prior to, and during, the fishing season. These openings are subject to change during the season by emergency order if necessary.

Neets Bay Terminal Harvest Area—[5 AAC 33.370]

ADF&G in consultation with SSRAA, shall manage Neets Bay to include those waters of Neets Bay east of the longitude of the easternmost point of Bug Island to the closed waters at the head of the bay. From the second Sunday in June (June14) through August 1, the Neets Bay THA shall include those waters of Neets Bay east of the longitude of Chin Point to the closed waters at the head of the bay.

In 2015, SSRAA is expecting a total run of 1,180,000 summer chum, 210,000 fall chum, 340,000 coho, and 21,500 king salmon to return to Neets Bay.

The Neets Bay fishery will open to all gear beginning at 12:01 a.m., Friday, May 1 and ending at 12:00 noon, Wednesday, June 10. During this time, the fishery will be open concurrently to drift gillnet, purse seine, and troll gear unless closed by emergency order. Beginning at 12:00 noon, June 10 through 12:00 noon, July 2, a rotational fishery according to 5 AAC 33.370 will be conducted for the drift gillnet and purse seine fleet. Details of the 2015 season fishing schedule at Neets Bay is available in a separate department news release (April 16, 2015) and can also be found on the SSRAA web page.

For 2015, the net rotational fishing schedule will be modified during stat week 24 and 25 allowing additional closures to conserve Unuk River king salmon. In addition, the THA will not be expanded on the second Sunday in June and will instead open on July 1, 2015. This loss of

time in the expanded portion of the THA will be for all gear groups and will coincide with the period when Unuk River king salmon transit this area as evidenced by tag data.

It is anticipated that SSRAA will be conducting cost recovery operations throughout the summer in the Neets Bay THA and additional rotational fisheries will not occur until cost recovery and broodstock needs have been met. Additional fisheries in Neets Bay will be opened by ADF&G via emergency order in consultation with SSRAA.

Nakat Inlet Terminal Harvest Area—[5 AAC 33.372]

The Nakat Inlet THA includes the waters of Nakat Inlet north of Surprise Point at 54°49.10′ N. latitude and west of 130°42.75′ W. longitude. For 2015, approximately 220,000 summer chum, 75,000 fall chum, and 48,000 coho salmon are expected to return to Nakat Inlet. Peak chum salmon catches from these releases are expected between early July and early August for summer chum and between late August to mid-September for fall chum and coho salmon.

The Nakat Inlet THA will be open from June 1 to November 10 concurrently to drift gillnet and troll gear. The 500-yard stream closure regulation [5 AAC 39.290 (1)] will remain in effect.

Crystal Lake Terminal Harvest Area—[5 AAC 33.381]

The projected Crystal Lake king salmon total run is 4,800 adults. In the Wrangell Narrows (District 6) terminal area, around 2,400 fish are expected. Under provisions of the Wrangell Narrows-Blind Slough THA Management Plan, the commercial fishery will be open to harvest 50% of the projected terminal run over 4,000 fish. Based on the forecast, there is not likely to be surplus designated for commercial troll or drift gillnet harvest in the terminal area in 2015.

The total Crystal Lake Hatchery coho salmon run is expected to be 5,000 fish; of that, an estimated 2,500 fish will be available for sport and commercial harvest in the Wrangell Narrows-Blind Slough area. No commercial drift gillnet fishery is expected on Crystal Lake Hatchery origin fish in 2015.

Anita Bay Terminal Harvest Area— [5 AAC 33.383]

Anita Bay THA consists of the waters west of a line from Anita Point to 56°14.26′ N. latitude, 132°23.92′ W. longitude.

In 2015, approximately 370,000 summer chum, 15,000 king, and 47,000 coho salmon are expected to return. The Anita Bay THA will open to harvest salmon by troll, drift gillnet, and purse seine from 12:01 a.m., Friday, May 1, through 12:00 noon, Monday, November 10. A rotational fishery will begin on June 12 between drift gillnet and purse seine fleets with a time ratio of one to one and then change to a time ratio of two to one in SW 31. This rotational fishing period will conclude on August 31 and will open to both gear groups concurrently through the rest of the season. Details of this schedule were developed by SSRAA and announced by ADF&G in a News Release issued March 25.

DOUGLAS ISLAND PINK AND CHUM INC. TERMINAL AREA FISHERIES

Boat Harbor Terminal Harvest Area

The projection for the Amalga and Boat Harbor Terminal Harvest Area (BHTHA) enhanced chum salmon run in 2015 is approximately 1.35 million fish. This forecast run is well below the 1991–2014 average of 2.5 million fish. The preseason projections are combined projections for

Amalga and Boat Harbor returns combined as all of DIPAC's chum releases in Lynn Canal are thermal marked with the same pattern.

The BHTHA will be opened for extended periods beginning in SW 28 (July 5). The BHTHA is defined as those waters within two nautical miles of the western shoreline of Lynn Canal south of the latitude of Danger Point at 58°41.73′ N. latitude and north of a point 2.4 miles north of Point Whidbey at 58°37.05′ N. latitude. The northern line of the Boat Harbor area will remain at the latitude of Danger Point through week 31 (August 1). The purpose of this strategy is to decrease the harvest rate on Endicott River and other western Lynn Canal wild chum salmon stocks that migrate through this area during the summer season when large returns of hatchery chum salmon are present. Escapements of wild chum salmon to the Endicott River have been below average in recent years.

Speel Arm Special Harvest Area

The forecast total run of Snettisham Hatchery sockeye salmon in 2015 is 214,000 fish. This is similar to last year's total run of approximately 215,300 fish. This run will be principally harvested in the traditional District 11 commercial drift gillnet fishery. Common property fishery openings may occur during August in DIPAC's Speel Arm SHA, which is located in the waters of Speel Arm north of 58°03.42′ N. latitude. Timing of openings in the SHA will depend on DIPAC's progress toward broodstock goals and the sockeye salmon escapement to Speel Lake. DIPAC cost recovery efforts in the SHA during July will be limited to waters in the immediate vicinity of the hatchery where wild and hatchery stocks are well segregated. Fishery management decisions for the Speel Arm SHA will be made jointly by ADF&G and DIPAC. ADF&G and industry have formalized the notification procedure for any extended fishery openings in Speel Arm. The Southeast Alaska Drift Gillnet Task Force agreement specified:

1. That ADF&G include notice in the *Southeast Alaska Drift Gillnet Fishery Management Plan* that extended openings in Speel Arm could be expected on short notice once Speel Lake escapement goals are met;
2. That ADF&G include notice in the region-wide news release on or near the end of July that extended openings in Speel Arm could be expected on short notice once Speel Lake escapement goals are met;
3. If an announcement is made for extended fishing time in Speel Arm, ADF&G shall provide a minimum of six hours of notice from the time the fishery is announced to the time the fishery opens.

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FISHERY CONTACTS

The following people are Division of Commercial Fisheries contacts for this management plan:

Lowell Fair
Region 1 Supervisor
1008 F Street
Juneau, AK 99801
(907) 465-4250

Dan Gray
Region 1 Management Coordinator
304 Lake Street, Room 103
Sitka, AK 99835
(907) 747-6688

Dave Harris or Scott Forbes
Area Management Biologists
1008 F Street
Juneau, AK 99801
(907) 465-4205

Scott Walker, Bo Meredith, or Justin Breese
Area Management Biologists
2030 Sea Level Drive, Suite 205
Ketchikan, AK 99901
(907) 225-5195

Dave Gordon or Eric Coonradt
Area Management Biologists
304 Lake Street, Room 103
Sitka, AK 99835
(907) 747-6688

Troy Thynes or Kevin Clark
Area Management Biologists
P.O. Box 667
Petersburg, AK 99833
(907) 772-3801

Randy Bachman or Mark Sogge
Area Management Biologists
P.O. Box 330
Haines, AK 99827
(907) 776-2830

Jim Craig
Publications Specialist
802 3rd St
Douglas, AK 99824
(907) 465-4236

Tom Kowalske
Assistant Area Management Biologist
P.O. Box 200
Wrangell, AK 99929
(907) 874-3822

The following is a list of telephone numbers that may be called during the gillnet fishing season to obtain recorded announcements concerning areas open to gillnet fishing:

Ketchikan:	(907) 225-6870
Petersburg:	(907) 772-3700
Juneau:	(907) 465-8905
Haines:	(907) 766-2830

TABLES AND FIGURES

Table 1.–Southeast Alaska commercial drift gillnet salmon harvest, in numbers, by area, harvest type and species, 2014.

Fishery	King[a]	Sockeye	Coho	Pink	Chum	Total
District 1						
Traditional (Tree Point)	1,267	55,828	91,342	708,357	184,289	1,041,083
Terminal Harvest Area (Neets, Nakat)	3,206	1,364	25,095	55,481	89,913	175,059
Annette Island	1,094	8,675	45,305	484,572	98,023	637,669
District 6						
Traditional (Prince of Wales)	2,092	58,430	286,815	415,392	106,243	868,972
District 7						
Terminal Harvest Area	7,020	175	7,500	803	43,488	58,986
District 8						
Traditional (Stikine)	8,023	19,808	30,184	33,830	84,771	176,616
District 11						
Traditional (Taku/Snettisham)	1,465	109,732	53,899	29,182	291,355	485,633
Terminal Harvest Area	6	17,006	287	8	54	17,361
District 13						
Terminal Harvest Area	3,402	943	1,062	93,777	278,245	367,429
District 15						
Traditional (Lynn Canal)	1,338	213,905	57,804	84,322	1,225,551	1,582,920
Terminal Harvest Area	58	20,777	313	6,280	77,458	104,886
Subtotals						
Traditional	14,185	457,703	520,044	1,271,083	1,892,209	4,155,224
Terminal Harvest Areas	13,692	40,265	34,257	146,349	489,158	723,721
Common Property Total	27,877	497,968	554,301	1,417,432	2,381,367	4,878,945
Hatchery Cost Recovery*	438	0	0	0	6	444
Annette Island Reserve	1,094	8,675	45,305	484,572	98,023	637,669
Miscellaneous**	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	**29,409**	**506,643**	**599,606**	**1,902,004**	**2,479,396**	**5,517,058**

[a] King salmon harvest includes jacks.

* No cost recovery using gillnet gear.

** Confiscated fish or fish harvested in test fisheries.

Table 2.–Southeast Alaska annual Tree Point (District 1) traditional and terminal harvest areas (Nakat Inlet, Neets Bay) drift gillnet salmon harvest, in numbers, by species, 2004 to 2014.

Year	King[a]	Sockeye	Coho	Pink	Chum	Total
2004	2,069	142,763	50,820	409,429	327,439	932,520
2005	1,711	80,027	65,353	559,296	252,630	959,017
2006	2,271	63,368	31,271	216,779	297,660	611,349
2007	2,057	68,170	29,890	360,986	389,744	850,847
2008	4,059	34,915	97,599	275,654	319,718	731,945
2009	4,922	70,607	68,522	174,052	339,159	657,262
2010	3,302	64,747	99,081	597,138	458,622	1,222,890
2011	4,661	91,825	36,183	357,811	566,508	1,056,988
2012	4,024	64,394	73,576	217,281	757,675	1,116,950
2013	4,483	55,948	111,133	763,434	329,680	1,264,678
2014	4,473	57,192	116,437	763,838	274,202	1,216,142
Average 2004–2013	3,356	73,676	66,343	393,186	403,884	965,508

[a] King salmon harvest includes jacks.

Table 3.–Southeast Alaska annual Prince of Wales (District 6) traditional drift gillnet salmon harvest, in numbers, by species, 2004 to 2014.

Year	King[a]	Sockeye	Coho	Pink	Chum	Total
2004	2,735	116,259	138,631	245,237	110,574	613,436
2005	1,572	110,192	114,440	461,187	198,564	885,955
2006	1,948	91,980	69,015	149,907	268,436	581,286
2007	2,144	92,481	80,573	383,355	297,998	856,551
2008	1,619	30,533	116,074	90,217	102,156	340,599
2009	2,138	111,984	144,569	143,589	287,707	689,987
2010	2,473	112,450	225,550	309,795	97,948	748,216
2011	3,008	146,069	117,860	337,169	158,096	762,202
2012	1,853	45,466	121,418	129,646	104,307	402,690
2013	2,202	49,223	160,659	474,551	94,260	780,895
2014	**2,092**	**58,430**	**286,815**	**415,392**	**106,243**	**868,972**
Average 2004–2013	2,169	90,664	128,879	272,465	172,005	666,182

[a] King salmon harvest includes jacks.

Table 4.–Southeast Alaska annual Stikine River (District 8) traditional drift gillnet salmon harvest, in numbers, by species, 2004 to 2014.

Year	King[a]	Sockeye	Coho	Pink	Chum	Total
2004	7,410	103,392	26,617	20,439	37,996	195,854
2005	26,970	99,465	42,203	106,395	150,121	425,154
2006	30,033	61,298	34,430	56,810	343,827	526,398
2007	17,463	70,580	19,880	39,872	177,573	325,368
2008	14,599	35,679	34,479	18,105	81,876	184,738
2009	2,830	36,680	30,860	27,010	190,800	288,180
2010	2,359	32,737	42,772	58,610	51,005	187,483
2011	5,321	51,478	20,720	65,022	142,526	285,067
2012	8,027	21,997	20,100	16,374	240,569	307,067
2013	10,817	20,609	43,669	116,026	103,365	294,486
2014	**8,023**	**19,808**	**30,184**	**33,830**	**84,771**	**176,616**
Average 2004–2013	12,583	53,392	31,573	52,466	151,966	301,980

[a] King salmon harvest includes jacks.

Table 5.–Southeast Alaska annual Taku/Snettisham (District 11) traditional and terminal harvest area drift gillnet salmon harvest, in numbers, by species, 2004 to 2014.

Year	King[a]	Sockeye	Coho	Pink	Chum	Total
2004	2,345	283,756	45,769	154,640	131,757	618,267
2005	23,301	106,048	21,289	182,778	93,700	427,116
2006	11,261	262,527	60,145	191,992	382,952	908,877
2007	1,452	112,241	22,394	100,375	590,169	826,631
2008	2,193	116,693	37,349	90,162	774,095	1,020,492
2009	6,800	62,070	36,615	56,801	918,350	1,080,636
2010	1,685	76,607	62,241	132,785	488,898	762,216
2011	2,510	163,896	28,574	344,766	667,929	1,207,675
2012	1,291	140,898	24,115	193,969	566,741	927,009
2013	1,224	207,231	51,441	127,343	726,849	1,114,088
2014	**1,471**	**126,738**	**54,186**	**29,190**	**291,409**	**502,994**
Average 2004–2013	5,406	153,197	38,993	157,561	534,144	889,301

[a] King salmon harvest includes jacks.

Table 6.–Southeast Alaska annual Lynn Canal (District 15) traditional and terminal harvest area drift gillnet salmon harvest, in numbers, by species, 2004 to 2014.

Year	King[a]	Sockeye	Coho	Pink	Chum	Total
2004	805	151,245	51,960	98,341	745,450	1,047,801
2005	710	65,469	27,947	209,833	326,895	630,854
2006	344	145,579	55,133	94,700	1,094,212	1,390,002
2007	1,063	156,798	18,137	89,782	823,158	1,089,957
2008	659	46,655	46,932	26,034	1,072,135	1,192,415
2009	681	126,594	35,820	163,057	845,710	1,171,862
2010	871	100,973	65,870	171,054	764,629	1,103,397
2011	1,177	63,788	33,761	508,930	1,115,821	1,723,477
2012	2,736	224,643	23,321	353,271	1,567,227	2,171,198
2013	1,149	122,097	68,009	127,703	1,509,501	1,828,459
2014	**1,396**	**234,682**	**58,117**	**90,602**	**1,303,009**	**1,687,806**
Average 2004–2013	1,020	120,384	42,689	184,271	986,474	1,334,942

[a] King salmon harvest includes jacks.

Table 7.–Performance of the Tree Point drift gillnet fishery sockeye salmon harvest under the 1999 PST agreement.

Year	Nass River Total Return	Nass River Escapement	Allowable Nass River AAH	Allowable Alaska Harvest (13.8%)	Actual Nass River Alaska Harvest	Cumulative: +overage / *(-underage)*
1999	842,806	200,000	642,806	88,707	129,794	41,087
2000	625,983	200,000	425,983	58,786	46,305	28,606
2001	580,616	167,258	413,358	57,043	55,096	26,659
2002	1,403,976	200,000	1,203,976	166,149	90,553	*-48,937*
2003	1,177,472	200,000	997,472	131,891	72,942	*-110,886*
2004	986,098	200,000	786,098	108,482	110,340	*-109,028*
2005	666,880	200,000	466,880	64,429	55,319	*-118,138*
2006	775,110	200,000	575,110	79,365	47,948	*-149,555*
2007	602,208	164,745	437,463	60,370	46,369	*-163,556*
2008	380,397	200,000	180,397	24,895	24,359	*-164,092*
2009	575,336	200,000	375,336	51,796	55,270	*-160,618*
2010	438,941	200,000	238,941	32,974	26,613	*-166,979*
2011	556,710	200,000	356,710	49,226	55,122	*-161,083*
2012	476,821	200,000	276,821	38,201	38,983	*-160,302*
2013[a]	422,145	200,000	252,000	34,776	38,212	*-162,722*
2014[b]	642,000	200,000	422,145	58,256	39,080	*-181,899*

[a] Preliminary Information
[b] DFO (Department of Fisheries and Oceans) forecast

Table 8.–Biological and sustainable escapement goals for Lynn Canal salmon stocks by species and location.

Species	Stock	Escapement Goal Type	Escapement Goal Range	Escapement Method
Sockeye[a]	Chilkoot Lake Total	Sustainable	38,000 to 86,000	Weir Count
Sockeye[a]	Chilkat Lake Total	Biological	70,000 to 150,000	DIDSON Count
Coho[b]	Berners River	Biological	4,000 to 9,200	Peak Foot Count
Coho[c]	Chilkat River Combined	Biological	30,000 to 70,000	Sum of Peak Foot Index Counts
King[d]	Chilkat River Combined	Biological	1,750 to 3,500	Mark-Recapture Estimate
Fall Chum[e]	Chilkat River Total	Sustainable	75,000 to 250,000	Fish wheel index

[a] Eggers et al. 2009
[b] Shaul and Crabtree 2005
[c] Ericksen and Fleischman 2006
[d] Ericksen and McPherson 2004
[e] Heinl et al. 2014

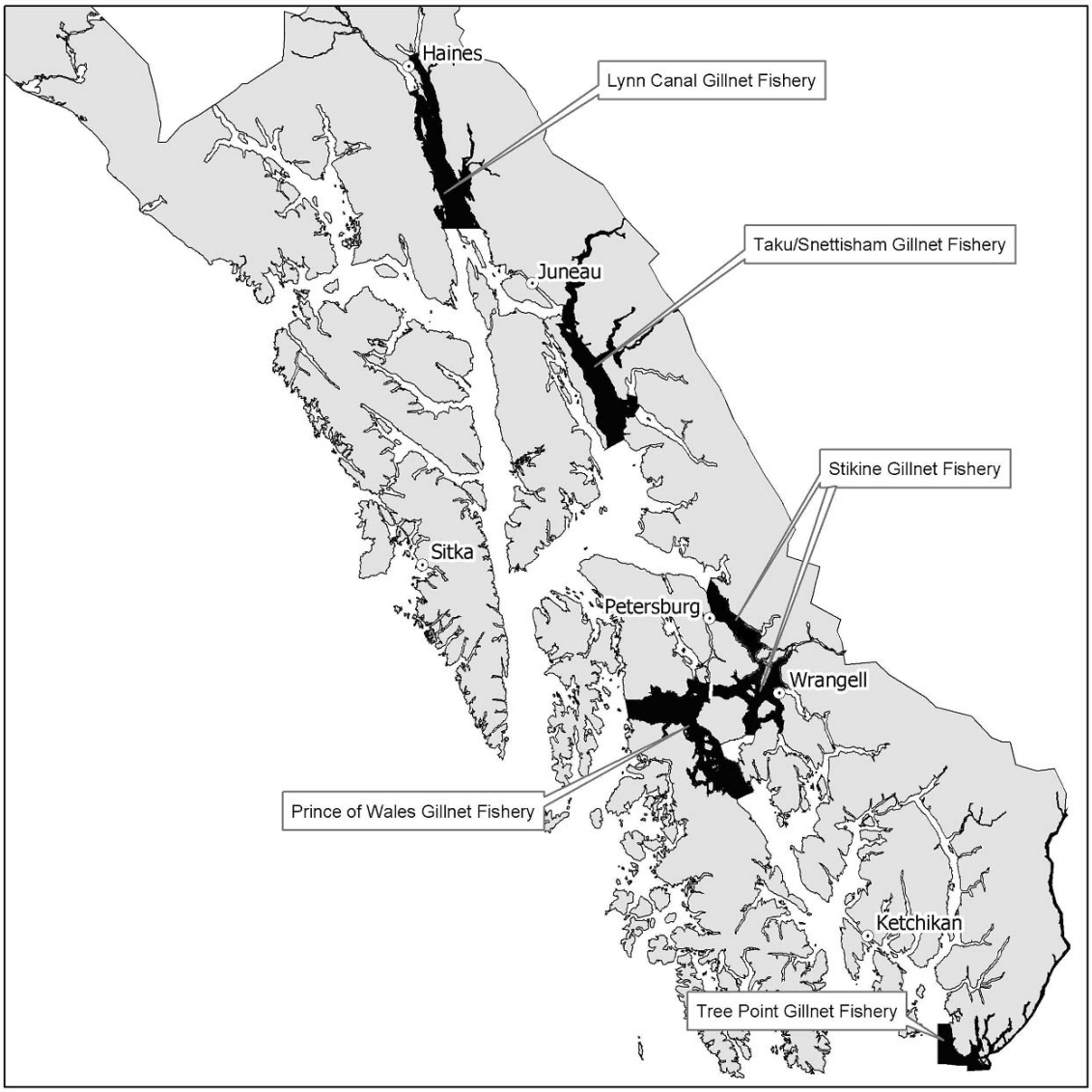

Figure 1.–Traditional drift gillnet fishing areas in Southeast Alaska.